

12 July 1978

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An Intelligence Assessment

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Cuba: Rising Manpower Resources

*Central Intelligence Agency
National Foreign Assessment Center*

July 1977

Key Judgments

Cuba's military and working-age manpower resources will increase sharply over the next decade as the 1960s' "baby boom" generation comes of age. Although the total population will grow at only 1.6 percent annually,

- "Able-bodied" persons (males between the ages of 17 and 59, and females between 17 and 54) will increase 2.8 percent annually, from the present 4.7 million to 6.2 million in 1987.
- The labor force will grow 2.9 percent annually, from 2.8 million to at least 3.7 million by 1987 and even higher if female participation rates increase as expected.
- The number of "military-age" males (17 to 19 years) will jump 45 percent, to 383,000 in 1983 before dipping to 345,000 in 1987—still well above current levels.

Given the modest prospects for economic growth in the foreseeable future, the Castro government may find it difficult to provide productive employment at home for the large influx of relatively well-educated jobseekers. As a result, Havana will have not only the capacity but perhaps an added incentive to increase significantly its armed forces and its foreign assistance programs.

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Figure 1.

Cuba: Population by age and sex

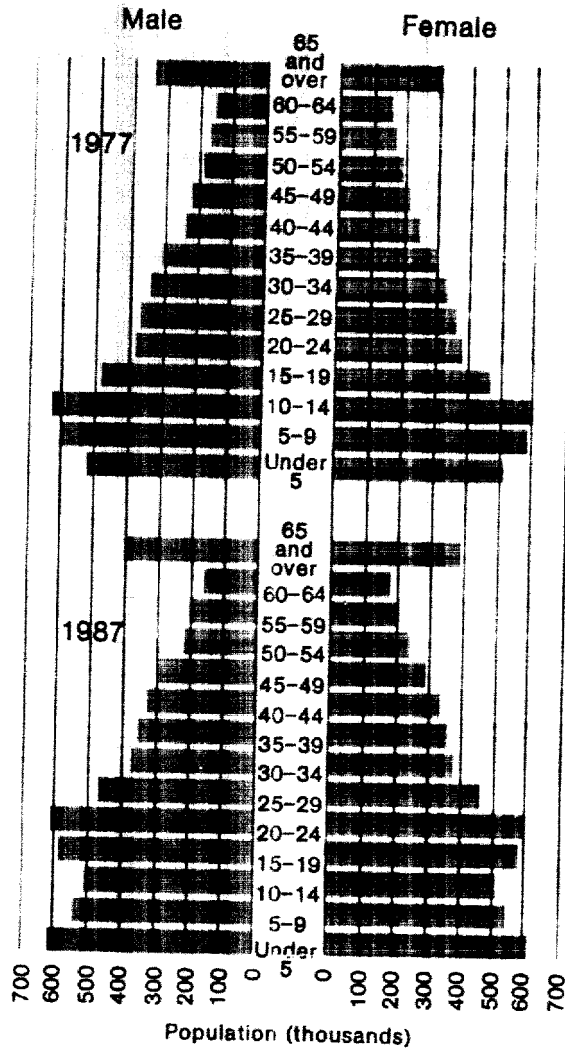
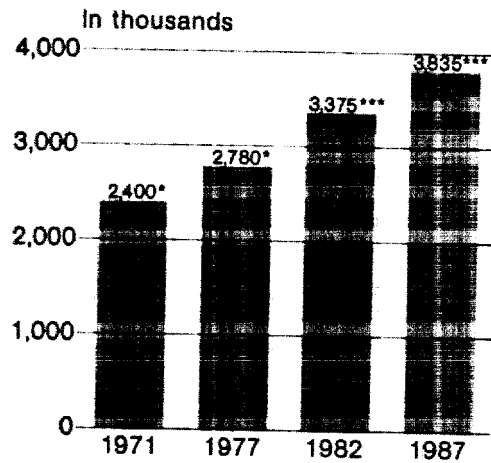


Figure 2.

Cuba: Labor force



*Actual

**Projection based on current participation rates of 84% of civilian "able-bodied" males and 35% of "able-bodied" females and no change in active armed forces.

***Projection based on participation rates of 84% of civilian "able-bodied" males and 40% of "able-bodied" females and no change in active armed forces.

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Cuba: Rising Manpower Resources

Introduction

Cuba's "able-bodied" population (males between the ages of 17 and 59, and females between 17 and 54) will increase from 4.7 million at the end of 1977 to 6.2 million in 1987 (see figure 1). Assuming male and female participation rates continue at present levels, the labor force will grow from approximately 2.8 million to nearly 3.7 million by 1987 (see figure 2). The average annual increase of 91,000 is 44 percent greater than the 1971-77 average and represents an acceleration in the annual labor force growth rate from 2.5 percent to 2.9 percent, with the bulk of the increase coming in the first half of the decade. If the participation rate for females rises, as may well be the case, the annual growth in the labor force would be even greater, perhaps rising to or exceeding 105,000 or 3.3 percent per annum.

The manpower increase will be even more evident in the "males of military age" category (arbitrarily defined to include males from 17 to 19). (See figure 3.) The number of these military-age males, which was relatively stable in the early to mid-1970s, began to rise rapidly after 1975 and will reach 383,000 by 1983—a 45-percent increase over the 1977 figure. A gradual decline thereafter will reduce the number to 345,000 by 1987—a figure that is still 31 percent above the 1977 level. The Castro government relies heavily on new recruits to sustain its active armed forces, which currently numbers about 120,000 men, plus 60,000 reservists who can be mobilized within 24 hours.

The expansion reflects a sharp increase in Cuban fertility in the 1960s. The crude birth rate rose from 26.1 per 1,000 persons in 1958—the last pre-Castro year—to 35.1 in 1963-64, before dropping to 29.2 in 1969 and subsequently plum-

meting to 20.7 in 1975. The Castro government, unlike the governments of many less developed countries, did not attempt to enforce family planning programs stringently because of its overriding interest in building a base for the continuation of the Revolution in the face of a massive exodus of the Cuban population and perceived foreign economic and military threats to the island. In the early years of the Revolution, at least 5 percent of the Cuban population left the island, including the bulk of the middle class with its technical and administrative expertise, at the same time the economy was being subjected to various degrees of economic sanctions by the developed countries of the Western world.

Asset or Liability?

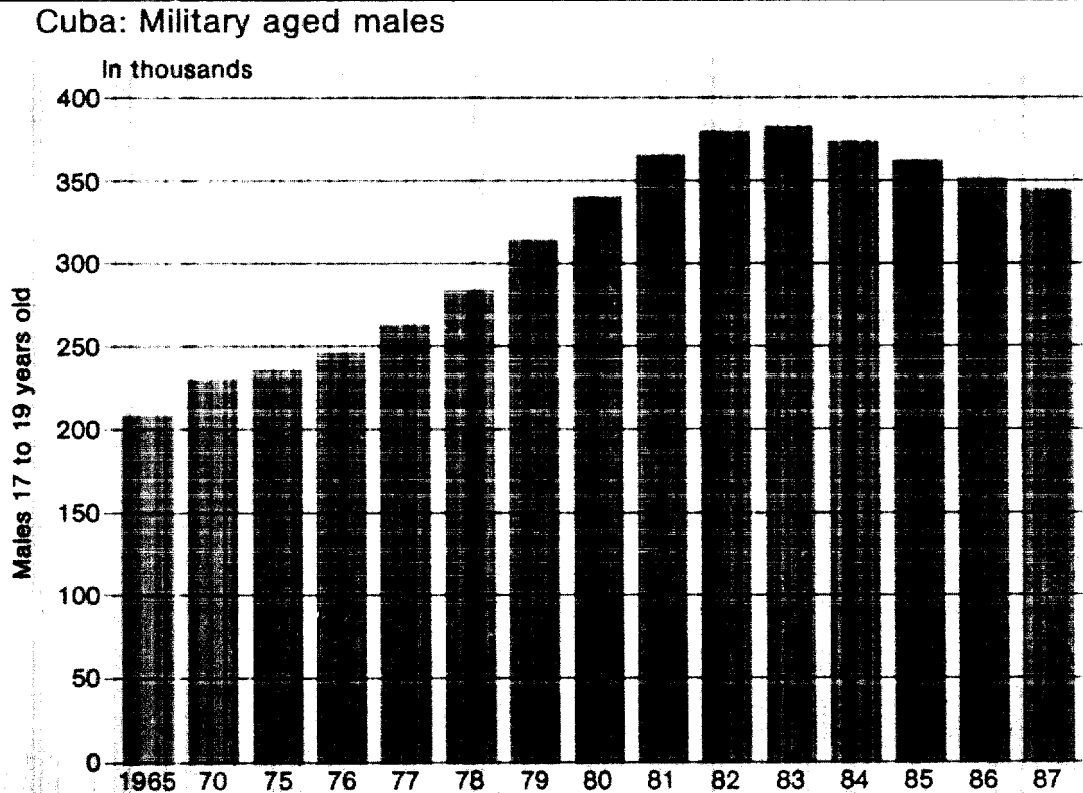
The pending expansion of the labor force is potentially both an asset and a liability for the Cuban Government. In contrast to the early Castro years, the new entrants are generally well educated by both Cuban and Third World standards. Most have received a high school education, and a growing number are university or technical school graduates. They also are instilled with a high degree of nationalism, motivation, and self-esteem that heightens their perceived abilities and potential roles in the continuation of the Revolution. The assimilation of these relatively well-educated personnel into the labor force could significantly expand productive capacity by raising the ratio of "able-bodied" to total population and by providing the high-quality worker necessary for an increasingly complex economy (see figure 4).

Havana, however, may have difficulty finding productive employment for the large influx of new workers, given the reduced prospects for economic growth. Over the past two years, Cuba

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Figure 3.



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has been forced to reduce planned investment and make at least two major downward revisions in its 1976-80 Five-Year Plan because of low world sugar prices. The bleak prospects for any rise in sugar prices in the near future will continue to restrain imports from non-Communist countries, which traditionally supply a large portion of Cuba's capital equipment and intermediate goods. Projected increases in deliveries of capital goods from Communist countries are unlikely to make up all of the shortfall.

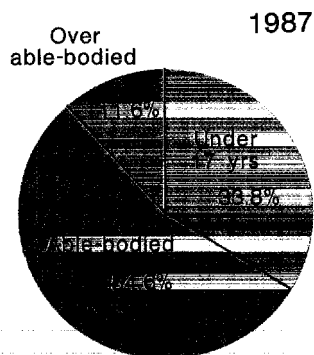
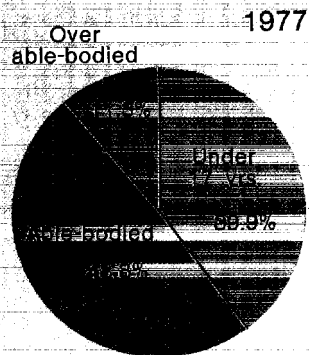
The need to increase economic growth is particularly important given the poor prospects for increased employment in the traditional, labor-

intensive agriculture sector (see the table). Employment in the sugar industry has steadily diminished since the early 1970s because of the increased mechanization of the sugarcane harvest, government efforts to reduce redundant workers in the milling sector, and the continuing trend toward exporting bulk rather than bagged sugar. The reduction of harvest workers will continue, since Havana is planning to increase the level of mechanization from the present 40 percent of the harvest to 60 percent by 1980. The potential for employment in nonsugar agricultural sectors is limited by the extensive reliance on part-time school-age labor and by the gradual collectivization of small private farms.

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Figure 4.

Cuba: Population by major age category



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The ability of the domestic economy to absorb new entrants to the labor market is further strained by the small pockets of unemployment and underemployment—a result of government reorganization and economic rationalization measures undertaken in the early 1970s and of the continued mismanagement of resources. The existence of some 80,000 unemployed—equal to 2.9 percent of the Cuban labor force—was acknowledged by Cuban officials at the National People's Assembly held in June 1978.

Havana's Policy Options

Should Cuba be unable to accommodate the large influx of workers domestically, it will have not only the capability but perhaps the incentive to divert a significant portion of these people to its expanding foreign assistance programs and/or increase its armed forces. Cuba currently has an estimated 7,000 to 9,000 civilians overseas, and President Castro has announced that this number will be increased by 4,000 to 5,000 by the end of the year. About 90 percent of the Cuban technicians are stationed in Africa—the majority in Angola—where they are primarily involved in rural development, education, and public health projects—all areas in which Cuba has accumulated expertise at home.

Diversion of such services abroad would both enhance what has proved to be an effective instrument of Cuban foreign policy and provide an outlet for the possible manpower surplus. Foreign service on behalf of the Revolution affords a meaningful opportunity for idealistic young Cubans to prove their revolutionary credentials while at the same time blunting the pressure of the "rising expectations" syndrome at home. This outlet is particularly important because in the past, misuse of well-educated workers due to mismanagement and political favoritism has led to disgruntlement, lowered morale, and even caused some questioning of the system itself.

With an expanded manpower pool, Havana would also have the capability over the next five years to increase sharply the size of its military forces if it chose to do so. During the 1960s,

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Cuba: Employment by Economic Sector

	1,000 Persons									
	1962	1964	1966	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	
Total	1,823	1,885	1,993	2,402	2,426	2,526	2,573	2,623	2,716	
State sector	1,083	1,369	1,517	2,082	2,126	2,246	2,313	2,391	2,496	
Agriculture	297	396	450	604	637	645	646	685	679	
Manufacturing, mining, and utilities	267	303	323	440	438	453	469	472	478	
Construction	104	108	118	133	154	177	183	208	250	
Transportation and communication	74	82	82	175	177	179	185	187	205	
Commerce	132	216	235	168	166	177	184	179	179	
Services and administration	209	274	309	562	554	615	646	660	701	
Private sector *	740	516	476	320	300	280	260	232	220	

* Following the nationalization of virtually all of the remaining vestiges of nonagriculture private enterprise in 1968, private-sector employment has been subsequently restricted almost totally to agriculture.

when Cuba's military manpower pool was much smaller * and when the country was preoccupied with the defense of the island, it maintained an active military force of over 300,000. The number of active-duty personnel was reduced in the

early 1970s to the present 120,000 largely in response to Soviet pressures to rationalize the economy, but arguments against an expansion of forces may seem less compelling as Cuban manpower resources increase.

* There were only 210,000 males of military age in 1965.

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